

Message Text

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44

ACTION SCCT-01

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 MED-03 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15

CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-02 USIA-15 PRS-01

L-03 /071 W

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R 281058Z JUL 76

FM AMCONSUL BELFAST

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1369

AMEMBASSY LONDON

INFO AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

UNCLAS BELFAST 263

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINS, PINT, UK, EI

SUBJECT: PRISON CONDITIONS

REF: (A) BELFAST 261 (B) DEPARTMENT 175262 (NOTAL)

1. NEARLY 200 ULSTER DEFENSE ASSOCIATION (UDA) CONVICTS AT LONG KESH/MAZE PRISON BROKE OUT OF THREE COMPOUNDS AND ATTACKED A PRISON VAN JULY 27. PRISONERS SUSPECTED WAGON CONTAINED TWO ULSTER VOLUNTEER FORCE MEMBERS EN ROUTE FOR TRIAL ON CHARGES OF KILLING UDA MAN. ONE GUARD INJURED AND SUBSEQUENT SEARCH OF UDA COMPOUNDS REVEALED SIZEABLE CACHES OF WEAPONS EXCLUDING FIREARMS.

2. TENSIONS IN ALL PRISONS NORTHERN IRELAND RUNNING VERY HIGH (REFTEL A). FUNDAMENTAL ISSUE IS GOVERNMENT INTENT TO END SPECIAL CATEGORY STATUS FOR "POLITICAL" PRISONERS (TERRORISTS). ISSUE IS EXPECTED TO REACH CRISIS POINT WHEN FIRST PRISONER IS CONVICTED AND INCARCERATED IN ISOLATED CELL PROBABLY SOME TIME AFTER MID-AUGUST. PARAMILITARY ORGANIZATIONS HAVE ANNOUNCED THAT DEMONSTRATIONS TO PROTEST TRANSITION FROM "POLITICAL" TO "CRIMINAL" STATUS WILL NOT BE CONFINED TO PRISONS. GOVERNMENT HAS DESEGREGATED CRUMLIN ROAD JAIL
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BELFAST AND REPUBLICAN AND LOYALIST REMAND PRISONERS AWAITING

TRIAL ARE PROTESTING ABOUT BEING MINGLED. THERE HAS BEEN ONE MASS FIST FIGHT.

3. CONGEN SUGGESTS DEPARTMENT CONSIDER REPEATING REFTEL B TO EMBASSY DUBLIN FOR ANY OBSERVATIONS THEY MIGHT HAVE. POLITICAL CIRCUMSTANCES AND PENAL CONDITIONS VARY WIDELY BETWEEN REPUBLIC AND NORTHERN IRELAND AND VIEW IN SOUTH SHOULD BE OF INTEREST.

4. CONGEN ASSUMES EMBASSY LONDON WILL INITIATE ANY NECESSARY CLEARANCES WITH HMG FOR VISIT PROPOSED REFTEL B. DECISION TO EMPHASIZE CRIMINALITY PROBABLY PRECEDED BY PSYCHOLOGICAL STUDIES AND THIS RESEARCH MAY BE AVAILABLE.

SPICER

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NNN

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